



WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #158!

Greetings, Gentle Beloved Reader! We are probably back to regular schedule. The Love of the Professional Wrestling has an ebb and flow and I feel the surge. We have an urge we have a surge and it's out of control.

Your cover is by young BioTwist.

NOTE: Thanks to board member TimBlake for the Wrestle Birmingham. We have been trying to get it for months, and Tim came through like a champ. As always, if there is an indy promotion you would like to see reviewed in the DVDVR, feel free to provide us with DVDs. This is especially true for southern promotions. And now. PHILLIP SCHNEIDER.....

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PHIL SCHNEIDER'S ON-GOING TOP 20 of 2006

Here is the current list, reviews for the older matches are in previous DVDVR's

1. Chris Benoit v. Finlay WWE 5/21
2. Jun Akiyama vs Masao Inoue NOAH 4/23
3. Rey Mysterio vs Randy Orton WWE 4/4

4. Chris Benoit v. Finlay WWE 5/3
5. Finlay v. Rey Mysterio WWE 3/20
6. Chris Benoit v. JBL WWE 4/11
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9. American Dragon Brian Danielson v. Samoa Joe ROH 8/6
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11. La Mascara/El Hijo Del Santo v. Blue Panther/Tarzan Boy CMLL GDL 1/1
12. Rey Mysterio v. Mark Henry WWE 1/15
13. Damien Wayne v. Sean Denny NWA-VA 5/6
14. L.A. Park/Marco Corleone/Johnny Stamboli v. Dr. Wagner Jr./Dos Caras Jr./Lizmark Jr. CMLL 5/19
15. Yuki Ishikawa v. Hiroyuki Ito Big Mouth Loud 5/4
16. Low-Ki v. Necro Butcher IWA-MS 4/1
17. Rey Mysterio/Bobby Lashley/Chris Benoit v. JBL/Finlay/Randy Orton WWE 2/23
18. Samoa Joe v. Necro Butcher IWA-MS 1/12
19. Minoru Suzuki vs. Yoshiaki Fujiwara Big Mouth Loud 3/22
20. Juventud v. Kid Kash WWE 1/3

Previously on the list

- A.J. Styles v. Matt Sydal ROH 1/14
- Samoa Joe v. BJ Whitmer ROH 1/14
- Chris Benoit v. Randy Orton WWE 1/24
- Shadow WX/Mammoth Sasaki v. Abdullah Kobayashi/Daisuke Sekimoto BJW 1/27/06
- Finlay v. Chris Benoit WWE 1/30
- HHH v. Big Show WWE 2/13
- Finlay/JBL v. Lashley/Chris Benoit WWE 2/16
- KENTA/Takeshi Morishima/Mohammed Yone v.Kenta Kobashi/Yoshinobu Kanemaru/Tamon Honda NOAH 2/17
- Undertaker v. Kurt Angle WWE 2/19
- KUDO & MIKAMI v. Yoshiaki Yago & MIYAWAKI Chikara 2/24
- Milano Collection AT/Skyde v. Claudio Castagnoli/ Chris Hero Chikara 2/26
- Finlay v. Bobby Lashley WWE 5/8

1. Chris Benoit v. Finlay WWE 5/21

This list looks like it is going to end up the top 20 Finlay matches of 2006. 20+ minutes on PPV between Benoit and Finlay and of course it was amazing. I loved the early build of this match, their Smackdown match had a lot of matwork at the start, but this was built more like a Memphis main event. They start with a really tight collar and elbow, which they roll to the outside while holding on to, then they face off and talk trash, with Benoit grabbing a super quick double leg

and an amazing fight for a sharpshooter. Sharpshooter is a protected move in the context of the WWE, but I have never seen it sold like death like it was here. Finlay was struggling like his life depended on it. Then they go back to their feet and Finlay does a really great fake of a thumb to the eye. If the match ended with the ref DQing Benoit for poking Finlay in the eye, it would have probably been 17 or 18 on my list, instead they go another 20 minutes.

There were so many little pieces of Finlay greatness in this match, Finlay grabbing his own ankle to block the sharpshooter, shooting the half by the ropes, the constant shots to the back of the head, the hammer lock Dragon sleeper, eating the German suplex on the floor. This may be the first Chris Benoit match I can remember where he was clearly the second best guy in the match. Benoit ruled here, but this was Finlay's show, 49 years old and the best wrestler in the world. Who would have thought it.

2. Jun Akiyama v. Masao Inoue NOAH 4/23

My favorite thing about NOAH isn't really your big matches between big stars, it is when they elevate random undercard guys into a big run or two. They do a great job of making the crowd believe and even guys who have underperformed for years really step it up. Ogawa's GHC title run, Kikuchi's battling of the New Japan Juniors, Tamon Honda challenging for the GHC title and winning the tag belts, IZU battling for respect. Masao Inoue's big run is one of the strangest and probably the coolest, I think he had long been considered one of the worst big league wrestlers in Japan. In the last year or so, he has found a way to harness that shittiness into a formula that delivers great matches. The Dark Agents tag title challenge was one of my favorite matches of 2005, and his GHC title challenge is one of my favorite matches of 2006.

Inoue is perfect as the lovable heel loser getting his improbable big match. It starts with Inoue (who has visible indentations from his reading glasses) jumping Akiyama at the bell and hitting a big suplex and a roll up. Akiyama is established as a guy who can get upset quickly and the crowd buys the near fall. Akiyama locks on the choke, and you also buy Inoue going down quickly. Inoue then spends the next couple of minutes with some awesome stalling, and then some really great eye rakes. When Akiyama responds to the eye rakes with rakes of his own, the crowd starts booing him unmercifully. Akiyama is great as a guy who can't deal with the crowd booing him. There is a point where he just decides "fuck it, you want to boo, boo this" and just murders Inoue, including a calf branding into the steel barricade. Inoue is working as a guy with a limited number of options, he can't go toe to toe with Akiyama, and he can't out quick him, out wrestle him, or out power him. He needs to either catch Akiyama in a mistake or outsmart him. The rolls ups, and the stalling fit into that, and he keeps getting near falls by tricking Akiyama into almost getting counted out. Near the end Akiyama is just killing Inoue, but Masao won't go down. It isn't no-selling because he is so tough, it is more like he knows this is his only shot and despite all of his flaws wants to die on his sword. Not a ton of cool moves or fancy sequences, but still one of the best matches of the year.

7. Homicide v. Necro Butcher 5/13

A lot of people still dog ROH as a promotion full of indy dream matches, but this was a match built around booking more than dream matchiness, and was pretty awesome. It starts with about

eight minutes of Necro v. Joe which is always great. Joe gets jumped by Hero and Claudio and sent back, and Whitmer and Pearce come out and we have a two on three brawl for a bit. This was the weakest part of the match, but was still pretty fun. Pearce's piledriver on the floor was really nasty looking, and really should have taken out Claudio for longer. The heels take over leading to Homicide's music coming on to the crowd going nuts. The long term booking of this feud led perfectly to this point.

The Necro v. Homicide sections of this match were great, just craziness. The crowd char toss ended up being a really cool visual, and both guys took nutso bumps on the ring of chairs. My favorite thing about both wrestlers is the tightness of their brawling. Most of the shots from both guys land solid, yet it has the ragged feel of a real fight, when stuff misses, it misses in the way punches in a real fight would miss. I don't know if Necro would work as an every show guy, he would be kind of worthless in your throw away Chris Daniels 4-way dance, but it would be really stupid for ROH not to bring him back as a special attraction. He is one of the few guys you could bring in every couple of months, and stick right in the main event.

9. American Dragon Brian Danielson v. Samoa Joe ROH 8/6

You can't really go wrong with the two best wrestlers in your promotion wrestling in a main event for a title. I really enjoyed this match, I haven't seen a ton of 2006 ROH so this was my first chance to watch heel champion Brian Danielson, and he was a blast. The opening had Joe just dominating and Dragon kept bailing out to regroup. His regrouping stalls were really great, as he would do deep knee bends or slap himself in the face. He eventually takes over on Joe, by smacking his knee with a chair and working over that knee. This may have been the one part of the match that dragged a bit, you are going to have down spots in a 60 minute match, and I did enjoy Dragon's shit talking, him starting the "boring" chant was pretty inspired. Still it was obvious from the start time of the match, that it was going 60, and this part felt a little like a time killer.

Last 20 or so was pretty spectacular. Joe's tope was as good as I have ever seen it, it was almost Popetekisish like some one dropped a couch out of a four story walk up. Dragon's springboard into the crowd is the craziest highspot on a show with Jack Evans on it. The near fall section was great, I especially loved the head and arm amateur takeovers by Dragon into the cattle mutilation. Joe powering out of the Big Daddy elbows, into landing his KO knees was sweet as well. Final spot of match was great too, as Danielsons goes for a roll up off the ropes which Joe counters right before three right into the choke. Just great timing on the spot, and made the crowd go ballistic. This was probably the best 60 minute draw ROH has run, but I do think that these two have a better 25 minute match in them. Still it had three separate "This is Awesome" chants, so Meltzer really should drop the 5 on it.

10. Chris Hero/Necro Butcher/Super Dragon v. Samoa Joe/B.J. Whitmer/Adam Pearce ROH 4/22

This was the first match in the CZW v. ROH feud and was a totally fun all out brawl. Pearce and Whitmer are a pair of guys I don't really care for, but they both brought it pretty hard in this match. Pearce gets his head split open early and wrestles the match with a bloody vagina

opened up on the side of his head, and Whitmer takes huge bumps including getting his head double stomped in a chair and getting Psycho Drivered off the apron to the floor. Super Dragon was fun in this too, although allot of the interactions with the fans I read about didn't make the DVD. If I got to see him monkeyflip a dipshit fan, or beel a bisexual, I imagine this match would have ended up higher on the list. The stars of this match were Chris Hero, Samoa Joe and Necro. Hero was such a great pussy heel in this, knowing exactly when to hit a cheap shot, run away or cockishly slap on a cravate. Necro was Necro, he took lunatic bumps, bled alot and threw really nice combos. Joe was a total maniac here, just killing everyone he gets his hands on. The Joe v. Necro showdowns were awesome, and I hope we get another real singles between the two at some point. My favorite spot of the whole match was when Necro sets up two chairs with the seats touching to suplex Joe through, Joe counters that, knocks Necro down, and switches the chairs so the backs are touching, before powerbombing Necro through the backs. Just the look on his face and the timing of the switch was awesome. I liked the Claudio turn, and the CZW boys really needed to go over initially.

14. L.A. Park/Marco Corleone/Johnny Stamboli v. Dr. Wagner Jr./Dos Caras Jr./Lizmark Jr.
CMLL 5/19

Man alive is primed up L.A. Park just about the best thing you are ever going to see. This was an absolutely insane brawl with Parka flying across ring and just beating the holy shit out of Wagner for the first couple of falls. Really reckless stuff, Parka would just fly through the air and it really looked like he had no idea what he would do when he landed. He ties tape around his face and hands. One of the recent additions to Arena Mexico is Tony the caracturist, he draws little pictures of Mistico and Dr. Wagner, so Parka just beals Dr. Wagner Jr. right into Tony, grabs his easels and just smacks Wagner with it. After getting pounded for a two caidias , the technicos take over when Corleone hits his partners with a running dive from the ramp to the ring. Wagner comes back and just starts wailing away on Parka. Including ripping off his mask and apparently breaking his nose with a narsty enzigiri to the face. The third fall briefly turns into a match with Lizmark and Stamboli actually doing some nice exchanges, before going right back into Wagner and Parka killing each other. After this match both Parka and the two refs got suspended by the commission. There were parts of this that were really awkward looking, but it really just contributed to the insanity of the whole thing.

15. Yuki Ishikawa v. Hiroyuki Ito Big Mouth Loud 5/4

These are my two favorite wrestlers in Japan, working my favorite Japanese wrestling style. It probably should have ended up higher on this list. This was a lot of fun, but was really hurt by my expectations of it. Ito works a really aggressive style, where he will either knock you out or make a mistake. Teddy Atlas would call him a TV friendly fighter. Ishikawa is the crafty veteran here who counters Ito's aggression and tears him up on the mat. Some nasty shots by both guys, and some great tricky mat counters by Ishikawa. Ito gets two knockdowns and looks like he has the match won with a choke, but you don't want to take Ishikawa to the mat, as he outmaneuvers Ito and gets a sweet ankle lock out of nowhere. Great match, although I really think these two guys have a classic in them. This is a second match on a card, and the guys work it like a second match on the card. Ishikawa v. Otsuka from the first BML show was a semi-main event, Ito v. Tamura was the main event of the show it was on, and thus both

matches should have been as good as they were. This wasn't set up to be that and it wasn't, although fans of both guys would still really dig this.

16. Low-Ki vs Necro Butcher-IWA-MS 4/1

I am loving all of these Necro indy dream matches. I usually hate dream match wrestling, but Necro is a guy who brings his own thing to every match he is in, in a way that you get to see a bunch of random guys work a Necro match, rather than just watching two athletes have a contest. Low-Ki is a guy who will beat the shit out of you, and Necro will take a huge beating so that is what we got to see. I was live for Ki knocking out Dan Maff, and some of the shots on Necro looked worse than what he hit Maff with. Necro was able to land some of his big shots too, and his punches looked totally awesome here. Still Necro really works better in 10-15 minute matches, and this lasted too long. Matches this brutal tend to get a little repetitive. If someone is taking a KO level beating 5 minutes in, and is taking a KO level beating 17 minutes in, it kind of makes the guy giving the beating look like shit. It was always my problem with the Momoe Nakanishi v. Kumiko Maeakawa matches, and this wasn't as egregious as that, it was still bad. Still this match had a lot of goodness in it. The double stomp through the table was the spot of the year so far, and this had a ton of holy shit moments in it.

19. Minoru Suzuki vs Yoshiaki Fujiwara- Big Mouth Loud 3/22

These guys have a couple of matches on the upcoming 80's Other Japan set, this may have been as good of either of those, and Fujiwara is nearly 60. He also neither looks or wrestles particularly different than he did 17 years ago. Fujiwara is a guy who looked 57 when he was 27 and now still looks 57. He is some weird Dorian Grey thing, where he aged all he was going to age immediately and will stay that way forever. The match had some awesome mat counters, including the first move of the match which had Fujiwara counter a Suzuki shoot into a Fujiwara armbar. Fujiwara also had some sweet counters for Suzuki's sleeper suplex and piledriver. The speed that Fujiwara moves is shocking at his age, I mean he is as quick as tiny effeminate Ultimo students in their early twenties. Suzuki tones down his dickishness working his trainer, but still was enough of a cock for a Minoru Suzuki match.

Hidden Gems

One of the things I enjoyed about the early part of doing my 2006 MOTY blog was writing up some matches that might be under the radar. Now that I have watched more wrestling I have less room for those hidden gem type matches. So I am going to do an addendum for stuff that might fall under the radar of your average fan (i.e. no big show NOAH, WWE, TNA or ROH)

Katsushi Takemura vs Virus- AJPW- 6/25

Virus is one of those hidden wrestling geniuses, guys like Yuki Ishikawa, Hiroyuki Ito, Preston Quinn, Negro Navarro and Solar, who are doing brilliant stuff below the radar of even obsessive wrestling nerds like us. So anytime any of those guys show up anywhere you could watch, you jump on it. Here Virus carries mediocre MUGAist Katsushi Takemura to probably the best match of his career. Virus is just ridiculously fast, and has some crazy offense, including some nutty hammerlock front facelock neckbreaker. Outside of one armdrag to the floor where he got caught on the guardrail (no guardrails in Mexico or Big Japan) he hit his stuff perfectly. He really

made Takemura look great too, eating his tope nicely, and making Takemuras U.S. Indy offense look nasty. Takemura wins with a F5 which Virus eats better than a Hardy.

Pequeno Halloween/Pequeno Damien 666 vs Ultimo Dragoncito/Pequeno Olimpico- CMLL- 6/30

Really fun mini's match from Guerreros Del Ring. Mini Mexicos Most Wanted are fucking insane. I mean they are out bumping actual Mexicos Most Wanted. They also have a ton of fun nasty double teams and take all of Pequeno Olimpico's fancy armdrags really well. Pequeno Olimpico needs to switch gimmicks, his fancy armdrag stuff would work fine as a Pequeno for 2002 Olimpico, but current Olimpico really needs an Shane Twin to work as his mini.

This was an especially impressive match because Ultimo Dragoncito keeps hurting himself, in the first fall alone he messes up his neck on a simple snap mare, and then after hitting a gorgeous Asai Moonsault cracks his face on a front row chair. The match builds real well with each fall ending on something crazy. For the third fall Pequeno Halloween takes a reverse suplex on the floor which is Necro Butcher crazy, and was probably the fourth insane bump he took in the match.

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Arena Mexico- 5/13/06

[Phil Schneider/Tom Karro-Garsner]

Arkangel de la Muerte/Negro Navarro/Skayde vs. Hayato Fujita Jr. /Kanjyuro Matsuyama/Shinji Nohashi

PAS: We only got about half of this match but it was pretty fun. It is always a treat to see Negro Navarro, and he was pretty great here, locking up a nice submission and doing his great kip-up. Nohashi hit a cool tope with a nice camera angle.

TKG: Yeah that was a great camera angle. Arkangel threw some really nice elbow drops and Navarro took a posting well and any time you get to see Navarro it's a treat but there really wasn't much to this match.

Dark Angel/India Sioux vs. Mima Shimoda/Raven Hiroka_

PAS: Hiroka is the world's shittiest Etsuko Mita, but she did have a really nice exchange with Dark Angel. Mima Shimoda doesn't do a ton here, and we didn't get a ton of time.

TKG: This was real clipped and nothing you want to see again. I liked India Sioux's version of Virus' finisher.

Dragon Scramble Match: Matematico vs. Ultraman vs. Kahoz vs. Cuchillo vs. Black Terry vs. Astro Boy Jr. vs. Brazo de Plata Jr. vs. Daisuke Haonaka vs. Hijo del Fantasma vs. Toshiya Matsuzaki

PAS: Ridiculously fun match which was a total train wreck but in a really entertaining way. You got to see a bunch of old luchadores who never see the light of day. Black Terry had an awesome punch exchange with Ultraman. For an ex-high flyer Ultraman has really turned into Jose Luis Castillo in his old age. Cuchillo and Kahoz are guys I haven't seen in years, and they looked like guys I hadn't seen in years. Kahoz especially looked shitastic, as he was completely unable to bump over the top on his first attempt, so he has to run to the other side of the ring to bump to the floor. Also that actually looked like the real Matematico who must be 70. Total blast.

TKG: Black Terry looked to be guy holding this entire thing together working fun sections with Hijo del Fantasma, Matematico, and Ultraman and one of the Japanese kids. Gran Cuchillo comes out and stretchers the other Japanese kid just smacking him around with the butt of his gun, suplexing him on the ramp and then dropping elbows. Cuchillo hitting opponents with the butt of a pistol may expose the business more than Tiger Jeet Singh hitting opponents with butt of sword. But Cuchillo is way more fun. Cuchillo and Kahoz are really too old to pull off their miscommunication heel double team stuff. But fuck all that other shit: BLACK TERRY~!!!

Brazo De Oro/Brazo De Platino/Passion Hasegawa vs. Mazada/NOSAWA/Katsushi Takemura

PAS: This was alot of fun, the early parts were a little rough, as Platino spent the opening parts just doing all of Super Porky's spots but not as well as Super Porky. However when it got kicking it got really fun. Oro was especially awesome here, especially his stuff with NOSAWA, and his incredible tope. Passion was really fun as the fake Brazo fucking up all of the Brazo spots, and when Platino stopped apeing his brother and started hitting all of his dives he looked great too. Easily the match of the show.

TKG: Was that really Brazo De Platino. I remember him looking more scummy and garbagey. He does all of Platinos big dives but I don't remember Platino looking that kind of classically handsome. Platino's section where he was apeing Plata spots wasn't much and the Passion v. Takemura exchanges weren't much. But then fucking Brazo de Oro worked his section with Nosawa where they essentially did Ki vs. Red spots with Oro working superfast to dodge all of NOSAWA's offense and then getting in his own strikes. Brazo de Oro's speed was just amazing. And then once the match got going it was just on. I think my favorite Passion being too small to do Brazo signature spots was when he kept trying to lay across the heels only to get tossed off while Platino set up his big dive.

4 Way Dance: Averno/Mephisto vs. Trent Acid/American Gigolo vs. Brute Issei/Shigeo Okumura vs. Milano Collection AT/Kazuchida Okada

PAS: The match listing listed the Backseat Boyz, but instead American Gigolo was Trent Acid's partner. You know someone sucks when you are pissed about being baited and switched out of

Johnny Kashmere. Okada took some big bumps, but this match may have been the worst multi man match of Trent Acid's career. Imagine what that entails.

TKG: The screen says that this went 11:23 but I swear it felt twice as long. They do the everyone puts everyone else in a headlock section before the big guy comes out only to do a big man miss-communication spot two or three times. With Issei really playing poor man's Pancho Tequilla playing a poor man's Brazo Platino playing a poor man's Brazo de Plata. Averno and Mephisto are first eliminated for excessive rudisimo. Yeah so the Arena Mexico crowd is left to watch Issei/Okamura vs. Gigolo/Trent Acid. Do the Arena Mexico fans have any stake in an All Japan vs. PWU match up. All Japan is eliminated for PWU vs. Toriyumon finish. This needed Slugger.

Decision Match for the vacant NWA Welterweight Title: La Mascara vs. Hajime Ohara

PAS: This was okayish. Mascara is a little green to lead Ohara through a real lucha title match, and it came off as more of a mediocred BOSJ match which doesn't make TV.

TKG: Yeah this was where the lucha and the resu in your lucharesu just fall apart. This isn't worked like a lucha title match at all. There is a cool part early on where La Mascara appears to get pissed as though Ohara is taking liberties with him and the two just start swinging at each other. Baby Richard keeps on trying to remind Ohara about his closed fists and elbows. This would be fine in a lucha brawl but you build to the brawling parts of match. Ohara paces his stuff like a puroresu match so you don't have the lucha ebb and flow where wrestling section leads to break down into brawling section which leads to a regroup to wrestling section.

Super Libre: Dos Caras Jr./Hijo del Lizmark vs. Mark Jindrak/Johnny Stamboli

PAS: This was a pretty fun WWE Heat main event tag (2002 Heat, all four of these guys are liver enzymeric.) I don't think this was as good as the technicos v. Stamboli/Palumbo would have been, and definitely not as good as the technicos v. Jindrak/Cade (especially with all the real life familial heat between Dos Caras Jr. and Lance Cade) Still these teams work each other alot, and they have a ton spots with each other. Jindrak looks like a total superstar as he hits all of his high spots and is a taunting fuck, doing a little bird flapping with his arms after he flew. He has crazy ups, and if he actually moves to Mexico he will be a big ass star.

TKG: Not as good as a Heat main event tag...closer to a RAW one. Jindrak's taunts are great and him and Stamboli work like a touring tag team with lots of heel miscommunication spots that they could work against any face team. They do the old MX arm pull over rope spot that always makes me smile. And well, so about a year ago New York Times printed an article about the success of lucha libre in Mexico. Someone in WWE read the article and said "the only people who watch our shows are gays and wetbacks, we need more wetbacks". There was all kinds of writing on the internet about WWE bringing in Mistico and Ultimo Guerrero and who they should and shouldn't bring in. I proposed that they bring in Dos Caras Jr and either Sicodelico Jr or Hijo del Lizmark as they essentially can work you're basic OVW style and are tall and masked and

Relevos Increibles: Atlantis/GREAT MUTA/Ultimo Dragon vs. Perro Jr./Dr. Wagner Jr./Ultimo Guerrero

PAS: I liked this a lot too. MUTA is fun as an old old guy who still kind of can hit some of his signature spots at half speed. It's lucha every weekend there are a dozen shows main evented by guys like that. Ultimo who normally works exactly like a old old guy who hits some of his signature spots at half speed, actually seemed kind of energized, with his spots being hit more 3/4 speed.

[illegible]

Iceman King Parsons vs. Harley Race- World Class-1983-ish-[ROB NAYLOR]: Race as touring NWA champ at it's best. This was during his 7th reign as champ and he was every bit as great as you'd expect. Iceman Parsons was hugely over in Texas from 83-86. This is further proof as he's mobbed by fans on the way to the ring as if he is a new Von Erich brother. A side story to this is that Race is LIVID at both Parsons "cornerman" David Von Erich and not to keen on Von Erich suckup ref David Manning from a prior weeks happenings. Iceman dancing after a ton of his spots and shaking his head and "feelin it" is great. He sent Harley into the stratosphere on a back drop and to this day, noone, imo takes that fall better than Race did. This match was wrestled really old style with Iceman getting one up on Race in the early going on several fundamental spots with Race just biding his time and begging off and trying to get Iceman to make that one mistake he can take advantage of. A great part of the match...is when Race suckerpunches Iceman early, hits the snapmare to lead into his falling headbutt.... does the move...and sells it like he's in agony due to Parsons hardhead. Great spot that you just don't see anymore. Race was just so good at making everything he did mean so much. A suplex would be battled for about 20 seconds. It would be blocked...and then reversed. He'd then find a way later to hit the move for a 2 count. I had forgotten that Iceman used the Sleeper for a finish...as I only remembered his infamous BUTT BUTT move...(as called by Bill Mercer), but here you had Mercer calling attention to the danger of Harley getting hooked in the dreaded "SLEEP HOLD". They go to the SLEEP hold quite a few times. The fans in the Sportatorium were so awesome. Very energetic. Race was also great in this match for his ring positioning throughout this match. He almost always tried to land near the ropes so as to not be stuck in the middle and have a chance at losing this match. Iceman's punches were really great. This match definately made me want to rewatch or seek out more Iceman stuff. I recalled him being really fun to watch, but I recalled the same about Brian Adias and Steve Simpson and later found that wasn't the case and that I was just a young kid and easily entertained in the mid 80's! They get such a great countout nearfall in this match prior to the finish which has Iceman hitting the butt butt after David hits Harley with a hard right hand after Harley hits him first. Winds up with fans thinking Iceman wins...but David was seen by Bronco Lubich as interfering...thus no gold for Iceman. Mercer was great here saying "The point...the point is MUTE!!!" Freakin Mercer.

%^^%^%^%^%^%^ Gangstas vs. Rock-n-Roll Express-SMW-[RAVEN MACK]: Ahh, sweet Smoky Mountain Wrestling - the last great southern wrestling promotion. I'm glad nobody ever wasted my time and their money trying to make a new "brand" of Smoky Mountain Wrestling; shit can't be recreated that well usually when you try and force it. Look at New Jack - he's played this "I talk the craziest shit" gimmick combined with random semi-worked indecent liberties with no-names or fading legends, and none of it - not the ECW stuff, not him talking about gonorrhea or killing four people - compares to his splash into the mountains of eastern Tennessee/southwestern Virginia. This may have also been the last regular hurrah for the R-n-Rs as a team, and in fact, this feud, as well as SMW in general, was an excellent wrestling time marker for the transition from territorial old schoolness to more extreme envelope pushing material featuring women getting hit and crazy gimmicks doing ultra-violent matches. I love SMW Gangstas stuff, though I would've waved confederate flag bandannas I bought from the gimmicks table at them proudly. When you have to carry a gun because you think the fans

might attempt to murder you, you are a great heel. There is no heel that good in pro wrestling now, and may not ever be again due to the current more fan-friendly environment. Fuck entertainment, I want to get pissed off and watch some shithead who pissed me off get carved up real nice by somebody I can relate to. I need catharsis, not fuckin' homoerotic over-analysis. Life sucks and I'm usually too broke to be wasting money on some bullshit form of entertainment; give me some motherfuckin' moral-based violence to ease my angst.

Bob Caudle is worried that the ref didn't check the Gangstas for weapons, and you gotta love a play-by-play man who helps reaffirm the hidden worries of the fanbase. This time period of Gangstas was nice as well because New Jack had yet to fall prey to believing too much in his own gimmick, turning him into an extreme age minstrel show of his own original schtick, and he actually does things like headlocks and ropebreaks, which build a match better than pretending to type on a keyboard before smashing it over someone's head. This is southern life playing out at this point - a couple of good ole boys with the business in the front party in the back hair facing off against the rising negative influence of hardcore hip hop, and the junior volunteer firefighter kids were probably hooting and hollering with their uncles and aunts for "ROCK AND ROLL! ROCK AND ROLL!" but you know there were some little wannabe gangsta wiggers sitting up top in the bleachers high off homegrown rolled into blunts who were rooting for the Gangstas as loud as they could without calling too much attention to themselves in a sign of rebellion from their Smoky Mountain family roots.

But then Ricky Morton sneaks in to dropkick Mustafa into a sunset flip for the loss, ref counts it, obviously screwing the Gangstas. But their posse hits the ring to toss out Gibson and beat and bludgeon and bloody up Ricky Morton, telling the public, "Fuck your title matches and wrestling rules; fuck your family values and small-town morals; fuck everything you believe because I've arrived to ruin it all like you always said I would." I know we've become so politically correct we can't use any sort of stereotype to play on public fears, but goddamn, I miss shit like this. It was brilliant use of that area's wrestling fans' inherent lack of tolerance, and it sucked plenty of money out of their wallets in the process. I guess without territorial wrestling, promotions are forced to work towards a mainstream homogenized demographic; or perhaps with the spread of Wal-Marts and satellite TV, we've all become more homogenized. Perhaps if you had The Gangstas in Knoxville, TN, today, there'd be more kids in G-Unit t-shirts cheering for them than people waving rebel flags. That's not necessarily a positive thing.

@@@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@# LOVERBOY DENNIS CONDREY V LOVERBOY LEE THOMAS-[Stagger Lee Mailman]: Dennis Condrey is the best professional wrestler in the world. Maybe he has lost a step, but he dragged this heatsink Thomas through a decent enough loser leave town match, beating him with the Power Of The Punch, which pisses off NWA official Roy Lee Welch at ringside. Condrey is a heel when he wins the match, but wins the crowd over with a verbal evisceration of RLW. Every great abusive redneck uncle catchphrase is there -- from the I'll Jackslap You to the ever-popular Do What? and its kissin cousin Do What Now? But wait there's more. Condrey goads Welch into a rasslin match, telling him "I'll blow you up in five seconds". This after Condrey accuses, in great detail, Welch of stooging for years -- "stoogin's the only way you got anywhere in the business". After about five minutes of this, Condrey was a babyface. You can't front on him. He is a verifiable motherfucker, as legit as death itself. I would

pay to see Dennis Condrey headline long, long before I'd pay to see most other rasslers. And that is a shoot.

%^%^%^%^%^%^%^%^%^%^ Jyushin Thunder Lyger vs Satoshi Kojima- G-1 CLIMAX- NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING- 8/6/2006- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: I turned on Kojima's Kurt Angle-esque psychology so long ago that I think I can actually watch and review this without being complete fucking asshole. Maybe. Lyger is wearing the non-horned, I Am Going To Stick My Dick Into Your Wrestling Ass asstomper mask. Kojima comes to ring in his orange blu-blockers. Lyger so wins the Evil entrance award. Lyger is also evilly shirtless. SUCK HIS TITS, BITCH! Lyger's hair is very long and luxurious. You can see Lyger's eyes and they are underlined by age and hate and kicking your fucking ass. They wrestle face vs face or maybe this is G-1 Climax style or whatever- punch him in the fucking face already! YOU ARE LYGER. They fiddle with lucha timekillers and Kojima slaps on a chinlock and they kill some time on the mat. They start smacking each other it starts getting fun. Kojima stomps him some and kinda works the leg over. Lyger gets all twisty to make it look like hurts and they go back to smacking each other. Lyger starts taking a beating in the corner and Kojima can't seem to get anybody into it until he starts throwing these sub-Brian Lee elbow drops. Yeah, fuck it. I can't not be a complete asshole when reviewing Kojima anymore. Nice Piscado by young Satoshi that leads to DDT variations on the floor. Lyger bumps big for it. Lyger gets far more heat for making the twenty count at 19 3/4s. Lyger shotays the FUDGE out of Kojima and I can get behind Kojima receiving an assbeating. Kojima Kojicutters to TRANSITION~! and I'm completely not into his toprope KOJI-KUTTAH! that Lyger opts to no-sell. Kojima sells his Brainbusters at least. Boy, there's a lot to hate in this. But not a whole lot of anything in particular. I would expect Lyger to be able to drag Kojima above a super lowgrade This Is Awesome match- but he didn't even hold up his own end. BAAAHHH! I hate the world now...

!@!@!@!@!@!@!@ Gino Hernandez / Chris Adams stuff from early 86- [ROB NAYLOR]: Gino Hernandez was just such an incredible bad guy. It goes without saying to anyone who's seen him. I remember him and Adams as the Dynamic Duo really well, but totally forgot how great his turn on Adams was just prior to his death. I recently was given a tape documenting the promos of how they became enemies in late 85 leading into 86 and jeez, this was all good stuff. Gino was so fucking arrogant in the ring and on promos. The initial breakup angle started with Gino and Chris trying to beat Kerry and Kevin and Gino not tagging to Chris...leading to Chris throwing Kevin over the top rope to save the belts...but also after the match being furious with Gino, leading to Chris getting so pissed that he smacks Gino onto his ass when Gino tries to give him his American tag belt. The next week, you got Gino cutting a promo about that Xmas night tag match with Marc Lowrance. You have Gino talking about "hurting my knee" and "Chris kinda making a fool out of hisself and SLAPPING me", all while Chris is apparently NOT IN THE BUILDING. Gino then talks about how they patched things up in the dressing room after "Chris threw some chairs around so I had to knock him out". Lowrance was great as a shitstirrer here "YOU KNOCKED HIM OUT!?"

"I knocked him out...what, you find that SO HARD TO BELIEVE" - Gino, soooo great and cocky it is a sin.

Adams, of course shows up, and is awesome as the angry partner showing up late to the promo and notes "You said you'd pick me up"...and Lowrance is great in detailing in the calmest way possible.."Eh, Gino just set everything straight and you know, told us how things are good now, since you apologized after he HAD TO KNOCK YOU OUT". I wish wrestling on tv was this episodic and fun still. Adams winds up cold cocking Gino one more time. Gino then goes insane attacking Chris from behind with the belt and posting Adams very realistically and Adams winds up a bloody mess and screaming for Gino's blood.

A week later, they do the HAIR match angle....and Gino winds up throwing the "HAIR CREAM" in Chris eyes in the infamous BLINDING angle.....very realistic and Gino comes off as such a piece of shit whimpering pussy while amazing sympathy is put on Chris, who the fans in Texas always seemed to want to like to begin with.

Sadly, Gino dies in late January....another victim of the TOO MUCH TOO SOON lifestyle that pro wrestling and in particular Texas wrestling seemed to bring. They put the tv spot on of Gino's death on Texas nightly news and it was surreal to hear Mercer say how sad they were yet still noting "Gino was an very arrogant man and difficult to be around".....

I'm under the impression that Gino and Chris, had both stayed out of trouble would have been members of the Horseman. As in all honesty, they almost predated that Horseman lifestyle and gimmick of the fast cars, fast living, pretty women and dressing up to the nines. This old tape I'm watching makes me want to get that new World Class documentary for sure.

@#@@#@#@# WILLIAM REGAL AND DAVE TAYLOR V RAY GORDY AND DAMIEN BLAZE-Deep South Wrestling-[Mailman Jindrak]: Damien Blaze or whatever is sort of a halfassed Sweet Brown Sugar fiery black babyface. Gordy doesn't live up to his daddy's name, doing a lot of cheesy crowd hype stuff also with very little substance. What you want to see here, of course, is Dave Taylor, who still is just as solid as he was on WCWSN. All the British styled stuff, and he goes over with the double underhook suplex. This is the first round of some tag tourney, so look for Regal/Taylor to job to the Shane Twins by the time you read this.

!@!@!@!@!@!@ Andre the Giant/Jimmy Snuka vs. The Wild Samoans-[RAVEN MACK]: South seas background on this... Snuka is from Fiji, and island where the affluent tend to be Asian Indians, and there is a bit of culture clash because of that, but they get by, because it is a fun-loving island of good timed natives for the most part. Look at Snuka - never wearing no stinking shoes even in the grimeiest of cities, and always flashing an appreciative crowd the sign language motion for "I love you" before getting all superfly on some shithead who had it coming. Samoa, on the other hand, has always been an island of malevolent misfits and malcontents - something from even beyond Dr. Yakub's mad mind. But in the past decade or so, there has been generational conflict on evil Samoa, between the older school savages who love nothing more than to grow their hair wild and hit people in the head with coconuts, and the younger generation who has been corrupted by west coast hip hop and prefers to put their long hair into straight braids and wear oversized football jerseys and sunglasses - and find it beneath

themselves to even drink coconut milk, much less hit someone with one. So this match has the loveable Andre the Giant teaming with the good Pacific islander guy, who considers every man his bruddah, against a couple of godless beasts who would gladly cannibalize the referee were they allowed to run completely rampant had Captain Lou Albano not been around to reel them in.

HA! Jimmy Snuka promo before match is made even better than the usual Snuka promo because he says, "Now back from Samoan islands, them people back there are definitely something else, because they is as wildness as they look." No shit, Jimmy Snuka, that's what I was just trying to explain.

Match starts, of course, with Andre outside the ring, and I love the Samoans wispy long hair and beer bellies - basically they are me just with better throat strikes. Meanwhile, Jimmy Snuka has what looks to be some sort of perm and his body is muscularly cut in weird places like the upper thighs in a way that only a man who worries to goddamn much about his body could get cut, whether that be through nutritional supplements or wasting all day in a stupid gym. I would imagine Snuka killed that hooker because she made fun of his dick and he was all hopped up like those bodybuilder types can be and he accidentally smashed her head too hard too many times. If that hooker had pulled that shit with Sika and Afa, they would've laughed, gave her a fat slug of gin, and tried to do it doggy style. One thing about the loss of kayfabe that's always intrigued me is those situations in the past where your babyface is a complete dirtbag while the guys getting beer bottles broken over their head on the way back to the locker room are just good, fun-loving, devil-may-care half-lunatic loungers. (I think wrestlers are basically like seven different types of comic book nerds nowadays, unfortunately.)

Samoans double chop Snuka off the ropes, and in perhaps my favorite wrestling move I've ever seen in like months and months, Sika is standing there then suddenly is struck by the notion to kick a long diving headbutt, rather abruptly, after the double chop. That attention to detail of being a savage mind and not just a savage gimmick, they don't teach you shit like that in OVW. Samoans just keep beating on Snuka, and you get the hot tag tease again and again for Andre, who everyone figures will just end the whole thing because if he can hold seven women on his shoulders, he can beat up two Samoans, no matter how wild they be, but Samoans headbutt Snuka out of reach time and time again.

Snuka makes the strangest comeback ever, as he's been headbutted like nineteen times already, but Sika goes for a standing face-to-face headbutt and afterwards falls to his knees while Snuka wobbles but shakes his head no. Suddenly, his head is coconut hard, too. Actually, then he falls after punching Sika, so it was either a fuck-up by Snuka, or the most brilliant hot tag tease ever. Andre sneaks in for a can'ts-take-it-no-more strike against the Samoans every now and then, which they will sell like madness, setting up the infallibility of Andre, which makes the crowd more and more insane for him to get into this thing. BUT SNUKA MAKES THE TAG! AND THE FAT FRENCHMAN COMES IN AND DOES HILARIOUS DEVASTATING MOVES UTILITING HIS GIANT ASS! But even the Wild Samoans hard heads start to wobble Andre, but much like the old Ice Cube lyric that has brainwashed the younger generation of Samoa, Andre might stumble but he still won't lose. Snuka does his superfly splash off of Andre's shoulders from the corner, and I used to have a baseball card with that shit on it. It was my favorite baseball card other than my '83 Donruss of the San Diego Chicken. If Paul Wight hadn't have

had the benefits of modern medicine, he might've been an Andre the Giant. Stupid science, ruining everything.

CHRIS BENOIT V FIT FINLAY-Judgement Day, 2006-[Mailman Milliman]: Michael Cole on commentary called this "straightforward, in your mouth" wrestling, and, well, I guess we now know who wrote the blurbs for the gay interest videos they used to sell on ebay that said things like "hunky Brady Boone against saucy Sean Royal, their bodies press together in the matwork and it is delish". The match? For about 20 minutes, Finlay decimates Benoit -- we're talking Lorenzo level here -- with a special concentration on the neck. This was prefigured from the git-go w/ the opening collar and elbow taking a full 2 minutes. Was this stiff? Um, yeah, in that Manny Fernandez or Wahoo McDaniel way. Problems with the match? Benoit's offense -- suplex, suplex, suplex, and a crossface at the end. All of it well-executed, but predictable as hell, and not up to the level of what Finlay was doing psychologically. When it came time for the finish, Benoit didn't bother to sell much of what Finlay did to him; though this wasn't glaring or a dealbreaker, it was a real flaw in the match, and evidenced an actual burnout on Benoit's part. With the Crippler on the Hiatus for a while, it's instructive to view his work in this match as justification for that break. He sold the asskicking impeccably, that said, and I don't feel it necessary to come down on the match too hard because of it. It really is time for Benoit to switch up his style, but I don't know if he can do that in the WWE, so it might be time to ask if Chris Benoit really is an elite wrestler anymore, or if his heart just isn't into it enough to deliver on a high level. He may be a "lifer", but he doesn't have to seem so damned rote and complacent.

SUWA vs Mitsuo Mimota- NOAH PRO WRESTLING- 7/16/2006- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: Please note that I am a complete mouth-breathing rube for SUWA. If you have a problem with that then I can't really understand how an idiot like yourself got mixed in with the inspiring and alluring gentle readers that usually frequent the beloved Death Valley Driver Video Review. But moving on. Mimota is old enough to be my dad and I'm old enough to remember when the Outlaws and Molly Hatchet were considered cool. SUWA is adorned in pink, like a hateful valentine- perhaps a valentine that is a bullet shot straight into your heart. Mimota quietly enters the ring- Vigoda-esque, scared of the shithhead bastard but more angry than scared. It's a good recipe for the Professional Wrestling. SUWA is an asshole from the get go and Mimota is awesome being angry and wary. SUWA throws Mimota to the floor because SUWA is a fucking asshole and being a fucking asshole makes him the greatest type of heel for mimota to work off of. Only Japan pulls off the old guy with one shot left overmatched against the young shithhead. SUWA racks Mimota as he gets back in the ring and de-testicles him again and the crowd realizes that SUWA is a punk ass bitch. Fistdrops and taunts make the crowd hate SUWA more. SUWA slugs Mimota's in the balls while mimota is in the Tree Of Woe and YOU- YOU!- you and I- I- WEEP at the complete assholishness of the KING called SUWA. The dropkick to the face of the writhing old man is straight out of Clockwork Orange. Mimota fights out of a Boston Crab and the crowd gets molten for a move that would kill two minutes in any other match. Mimota ducks the Giant Dropkick and Vertically Suplexes SUWA and the crowd is all about the Mimota kicking the shit out of this fucking prick. Mimota with the lowblow for the schoolboy is glorious. Mimota powers out of FUCKING FUCKING FUCKING and reverses it

into a backslide. SUWA hits another lowblow and punches Mimota right in the face and hits a Shotgun Lariat for the three count. Postmatch, SUWA beats the shit out of everyone until Mighty Inoue trips him before he can completely slaughter Mimota. The ref and Mimota hit the Mr Pogo and Kendo Nagasaki Puerto Rico 1988 finishing sequence on SUWA and the do all this just so I will love the PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING more than any sane human should. MILLION BILLION STARS.

\$\$%\$%\$%\$%\$ DESTROYER V STAN HANSEN-AJPW-1975: Largely inessential carry job, where Destroyer works around Hansen as if he's just Bobby Duncum or something. A lot of head scissors, hip tosses, and side headlocks here -- basic though as competent as you'd expect. A lot of vocality here from both workers -- think Iron Mike Sharpe wrestling himself. Total midcard timefiller for the most part but the punches and strikes are awesome. [Scott Mailman]

Naruki Doi/CIMA/Masato Yoshino vs Roderick Strong/Jack Evans/Austin Aries ROH 3/30/2006-[PHIL SCHNEIDER]: I am pretty much on the record about my thoughts on Social Dance wrestling performed by smooth chested Asian boys for little Japanese girls and closeted American homosexuals. Don't care for it as a concept, don't care for the matches. However if I am going to do this project right I can't just dismiss well regarded stuff without watching it. Rob Naylor wanted me to watch the Dragon's Gate ROH stuff, and that's my boy. I am happy I watched this, as I enjoyed the match. A lot of these matches I have seen in the past, have no idea when to end, and just run spot after spot until they just kill the meaning of the match (which was really what was going on in the DG v. DG match, Please Don't Stop indeed). I never got the sense of that here, as it ended right about where I thought it should. It started with some faceoffs, had a beatdown section for both teams, and then went in a really hot run of spots with none of those sections going too long. The triple teams on Evans, were kind of unimpressive, Gen Next beating on Yoshino was good, but the offense on Evans was kind of bland.

I came away from this match not really wanting to see more Blood Generation, but wanting to see more Generation Next. Yoshino was 90's Raiders wide receiver fast, but outside of speed spots he didn't do a ton for me, Doi had a nice senton in the corner, and CIMA looked smooth, but nothing from any of those guys impressed me as much as Roderick Strong and Jack Evans did. Evans has always been spectacular, but his mid range stuff looked better then it has before, he actually had nice looking chops and kicks, plus he was really great at eating all of Blood Generations double teams and timing his hope stuff. Strong looked amazing, totally hanging with Yoshino during his fast sections, but being a real beast with all of the power moves, his top rope elbow was incredible too.

Super Dragon/Davey Richards vs. Jack Evans/Roderick Strong- PWG-2006-[ROB NAYLOR]: FromPWG's Hollywood Globetrotters show. This match is everything one could want in a tag match. Easily could be argued as one of the best matches anywhere this year. Everyone in this match stepped up huge. Kinda a hometown HEEL crowd, who were cheering Super D for being a dick...which always happens... but as a babyface, it doesn't get much better than Evans in this match. Holy god was he great at just selling and whining and

gasping for breath and getting the holy shit beaten out of him. One great deal about Evans, is he's at the point when he is selling in tags...where he doesn't ever even think of doing huge comebacks after taking rude looking moves. He just slowly tries to find his way back to the corner....then rest as the partner gets control back and finally tries to somehow make a difference with his last bursts of energy. The opening with the back and forth wrestling with Rod and Davey and Super D and Evans...was great, as expected. Richards and Strong is definately a match I hope happens during PWG's BOLA tourney coming up in September. The heat portion of this match.....just never ended. Richards at one point had Evans in a Mutalock type move but with a leg wrapped around Evans' fucking head...which looked extremely painful and inhumanly possible. It was made more horrifying when Super D went on to sit on the mat and push his feet into Richards' knee....adding pressure. Super D also hit a surfboard dropping Evans on his head type move. Super D also at one point moked Evans' slow crawl across the ring to get a tag...crawling WITH him..prior to just stomping the fuck out of him to cut it off. They let it build and build and build and cut off Rod and Evans' hottags immediately... but it all worked as by the time GeNext got their run of hot tag moves in....place was in a frenzy. This match reminded me alot of Barry Windham vs. 2 Cold in 93.... in you had the upstart challengers (Evans and Strong) getting the piss beat out of them....leading to one hell of a last spark from the good guys that tore the house down. Evans and Strong are imo, the most fun tag team to watch in wrestling. It's a shame they don't get more opportunities to tag. Also sucks that Richards and Super D are no longer teaming. They didn't do 1/8th of the stuff they could have, but less was more in this tag. Very very good match.

%^%^^%^%^%^ FIT FINLAY V JOHNNY SAINT- 1988-[Junkyard Mailman]: A 1988 catch-style match from Croydon, booked to go 8 rounds, but didn't quite make it. The story of the match: Can Saint overcome Finlay's size advantage? Well? Here's Finlay's promo at the end of his match, after scoring a third-fall submission: "You listen to me! British blood keeps me trim! I eat up British wrestlers and spit them out!"

Seriously gangsta shit right there. The wrestling? Well, a lot of US stuff from 1988, to me, hasn't really held up so great. I'd put this little TV main event up against anything Flair did in 1988. Or anyone else stateside. This was two of the very best at the top of their game, and, after a somewhat deliberate first couple of rounds, really got heated when Saint stiffed Finlay after a round-ending bell. Loads of quick sequences here, great chain-wrestling, and -- well, here's something -- Finlay reminded me a great deal of late-period heel Eddy Guerrero. Um, what else? The end of the second fall was off the charts -- easily the best executed schoolboy finish I've seen since 8th grade catechism class, with Finlay leaning hard into those ropes and coming back with so much torque that the schoolboy looked actually legit. This was on YouTube and I can't imagine it getting pulled, and everyone reading this must go and peep this out right the fuck now.

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ MASKED SUPERSTAR V GEORGE SOUTH- Exodus Wrestling-[Haiti Mailman]: This isn't a match so much as a feud recap, set entirely to "Connection" by Elastica. It is beyond incredible. Superstar is the heel champ; South, the booker and embattled babyface with a bounty on his head and a Jesus complex in his heart. Some clips are shown and they look pretty good -- having seen Superstar for the last thirty years, I

could almost guarantee that this would be a better match than, say, Rey Mysterio V Sabu. Jimmy Valiant surfaces here as the troubleshooter ref; Supe sez: "I never liked you, Valiant." Superstar goes over via loaded mask, Valiant is stuck counting the pin, and "the connection is made." Man, I useta wanna get with that chick from Elastica.

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ Davey Richards vs. Jimmy Rave-6/17/06-NYC-ROH-[ROB NAYLOR]: More Davey Richards greatness. He is seriously one of the best things about the indies these days. I watched his ROH debut vs. Rave from a week prior in CT, and damn it was impressive. Since then I've seen this NYC match, a phenominal KENTA bout from last week and a great 4 person match, which are really getting tiresome in ROH, but the Joe vs. Delirious vs. Rave vs. Davey match from Detroit's recent show is must see. Maybe I'll review that for next DVDVR. I saw a disappointing Davey vs. AJ Styles match live a month back...but I guess nobody's perfect. Richards does alot of grappling and striking and is as intense as it gets. He seriously reminds me of Buzz Sawyer with his rage and fire. Cept Davey seems to channel his rage for the forces of good, as he is great in these Rave matches in interacting with the fans. He does alot of the same hard kicks that one can see on any NOAH or New Japan show, but Davey honestly would fit right in, as his stuff is very legitimate and realistic as hell. He's a smaller wrestler, but his height isn't a handicap at all in my opinion, in that he just brings such legit looking offense. Rave is incredible in this match as he sticks to simple stuff like snapmares and boots to the face, scraping Richards face near the ropes and yanking at his nose etc. Just simple heel moves to piss of the good guy and the fans at the same time. Rave also is a great bad guy in that he EATS so much of Davey's offense and the fans just love it. Richards does a great kick combo that ultimately turns into the worlds most beautiful german suplex seen this side of Nakajima. Rave late in the match WASTES fuckin Davey with a knee to the eye and holy shit is it sick. Davey's eye immediately swells up to the size of a golf ball. Davey channels the rage of being damn near knocked woozy into a SICK finish...as Rave tries for a roll up and Davey just traps the arm, forces Rave face down and turns upward with his legs....forcing Rave to either submit immediately or have his arm broken. Rave of course, is wise, so he taps and runs....

Post match, you get a promo with Richards and an extremely nasty looking eye noting that nothing will stop him in his quest to move up in the ROH ranks. Very effective match in elevating Richards and very effective interview in making wrestling out to be very believable.

^^^^^^^^ BRUISER BRODY/ROCKY JOHNSON V KENDO NAGASAKI/MR. POGO- WWC-[Mitsuharu Mailman]: The thing I came away from this knowing is that Rocky Johnson really had no business in a ring at this point. He moved like Isabel Sanford, and wasn't really able to bump or go on offense for more than a few seconds without blowing up. His punches were still fine, but he had lost his Sweet Ebony Diamond fire in the belly. Brody gets to look more vulnerable than Johnson in the match, because he was the only face here who could bump credibly. So there's a funky psychology here. It doesn't matter much because the match just breaks down after some clubberin', with Brody waving a kendo stick like he's some kind of big man, and the crowd popping like they just saw something. This was probably fun live, but on tape didn't fully translate.

@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@# DEAN MALENKO V REY MYSTERIO

JUNIOR-WCW-6/19/97-[RAZOR RAMON SOFT-SERVE MAILMAN]: 6/19/97 brings us this match from a televised German arena show from two of the preeminent WCW cruisers. Hot shit? Well, sort of like cold diarrhea at first, with Malenko working a control hold offense for the first ten minutes with little in the way of counterwrestling. This static beginning is redeemed, though, first by some of the trademark Malenko power offense early on, then by a hot Nitro styled ending that saw Malenko appropriate the Walls of Jericho and the Gory Special for his own purposes. The match never quite lost the crowd, though it did come close, but the ending was a crowdpleaser, and both guys looked strong. For fans of sportsmanship, they shake hands and tonguekiss at the end.

Katsuhiko Nakajima vs Kaz Hayashi-7/3/06- All Japan Jr League Finals-[DEAN RASMUSSEN]: I'm grabbing stuff off the matches board because that's what it's there for. Mad phat props to Kevin for sharing. With the world. The wrestling. I haven't seen a lot of Nakajima so let's look, shall we? Yessssss.... KAZ look like KAZ. WHOA! This kinda goes for a while. 31 minutes to invest in 2006 Kaz Hayashi? Ooooh, I dunno. Oh well, I've already typed this much. They start with a nifty wad of chain wrestling. 31 minutes.... They start kicking each other really hard and then start forearming and chopping each other and other New Japan Heavyweight 1990s staples and then they really start kicking each other and business starts picking up. Nakajima isn't afraid to have the best dropkick in the history of wrestling. And Nakajima wrenches in a chinlock and he makes it look hurty. Yeah, fuck it. I'm sure I'll only be a little worn out after 31 minutes. At least they are making it look all hurty early. KAZ goes all Michinoku Pro with the handstand bounce off the ropes into a SHINING WIZAHHD! and straight into the KAZ TOPE-oops! Nakajima kicks him in the head as he starts through the ropes. Okay, fuck it. I dig this match. Nakajima just kicks the living dogshit out of Hayashi on the floor and through the rail. Then Nakajima bumps big into the rail as Hayashi goes back on offense. Nakajima goes leg first into the rail~! We have a story as KAZ dropkicks Nakajima on his bad knee. KAZ whips out the fucking NASTY Inverted Indian Deathlock and yeah, this match fuckin rules. Wow, that didn't feel like 14 minutes. This is quality wrestling. This is 4000 times better than Jyushin Lyger vs Kojima and twice as long as SUWA vs Mimota. Quebrada onto Nakajima while his bad leg is tied up in the ropes is pretty fucking beautiful. Nakajima kicks back to offence by really just kicking the flying dogshit out of Hayashi. Hayashi rolls out of suplex attempt and rolls into another fucking gnarley leglock- a really fucking nasty Stepover Toehold. Nakajima hits the ropes and I'm digging the selling and ass-beatings. Nakajima elbows to offence but Hayashi Dragonscrews to cut him off. Nakajima sells the leg as he does flying back crescent kick to knock Hayashi off the ropes. They slaughter each other with suplexes. This match is great. Nakajima is awesome as the young babyface fighting his way through the hellish offence of his veteran opponent. His flurry of selling the leg and hitting a move is fucking beautiful. KAZ's SKY HIGH CRUSHER was awwwwwesome. God, that didn't feel like 22 minutes. Hayashi goes for the Death Valley Bomb and Nakajima turns it into a Crucifix with a crushing twist. They kinda spend the next five minutes kicking out of finishers, which mars the real coolness of this match. Actually there is a section between nearfalls where KAZ punches Nakajima in the face harder than Nakajima can kick him and that sets up Hayashi hitting

Powerdriver Lariat Thingy for the pin. Yeah, fuck. I dug the fuck out of that match. 26 minutes. 26 quality minutes. Whoda thought?

&*&*&*&*&*&*&*&*&* CHRIS BENOIT/BLACK TIGER vs DEAN MALENKO/ BRAD ARMSTRONG- 06/15/94-[Mailman King Parsons]: a ZANY MATCH. Here's what to look for. a] Armstrong acquits himself well enough here. b] Malenko plays face in peril through most of the match -- not the guy I would've picked, and the match's heat suffers for it. c] Armstrong makes the decision, while on the apron, to work it like a southern tag, and it's a good thing he did, because otherwise the match would've had no story whatsoever. d] The finish, a small-package, is a big copout. I was not overwhelmed by the match quality. I enjoyed it well enough, but it was booked like midcard filler.

%%%%%%%%% BRICKHOUSE BROWN vs MCNASTY- 2005 Wrestle Birmingham-[Bullet Bob Mailman]: A stretcher match. On a TV taping. It starts off silly as hell, with Brown getting pinned and stretchered 45 seconds in. Brown is pushing 3 bills, and has the build of a Wendy's Triple. McNasty is sort of a SMW Tony Anthony type; a big ol good ol boy, he nonetheless did a double axehandle on Brown outside the ring, so he's agile. There were a zillion pinfalls in this, and it got better as it went along, with McNasty making Brown's offense look better than his opponents did back in the day. Lots of blood, and Brown hits a sweet outside the ring piledriver. The ending is hilarious -- Robert Fuller interferes... with the ETHER cloth.

^&^&^&^&^&^&^&^ ROAD DOGG vs RAVEN- Wrestle Birmingham-[Road Dogg Messee Mailman]: Loose, sloppy crap from a couple of guys who might as well be my brothers -- they do the mailman name proud in letter and spirit. Nothing you can't see on TNA. Except the ending -- Nise Dirty White Boy interferes... with the WHITE POWDER. Oh, Birmingham, so much to answer for...

%^%^%^%^%^%^%^%^%^ ROBERT FULLER/JIMMY GOLDEN/ELIX SKIPPER vs BULLET/BRAD/SCOTT ARMSTRONG-Wrestle Birmingham-[Sheik Adnan Mailman]: Yet more of that B'ham. A Texas death match. Many falls. Business exposing? You betcha. This sounded neat, but bored me. Not tryna diss, mind you, but I didn't get the point of putting a stip like this on a TV taping. If you are putting Texas Death on TV, what more can you give them when they come to the arena? Work is fine, nothing unfamiliar.

@@@ THE FLAME vs GREG COOLEY-[Mailmantic]: Not Wendell, but his brother, or his cousin. A typical Assassin squash from Southeastern, but with a catch -- a heel Bob Armstrong on commentary, just oozing derision and contempt, like a prototypical Stone Cold Steve Someone or other. The Flame and the Bullet trained together, which was really shocking -- I didn't know the Assassin trained.

^&^&^&^&^&^&^&^& Kerry Von Erich vs. Gino Hernandez-WCCW- [RAVEN MACK]:
Probably the first stereotypical reaction to this old match would be to lament the loss of strong

talents at such young ages, and due to drug abuse on both parts. Gino Hernandez never had the initial connections nor the time to make a name for himself like Kerry Von Erich did. And probably the first stereotypical reaction to this old match by stereotypical me would be to say something about hell yeah live fast die young flash devil's horns and talk for 500 words about one time me and this dude called Evil Ed got high behind a grocery store while listening to Kreator for the first time.

It's weird, as I get older, I often imagine not having the influences I have had in my life. Every time I go back home to where I grew up, it's someone I came up with strung out on crank, or dying in a reckless motorcycle accident, or my sister's boyfriend got addicted to crack and tried to burn their house down, or yeah my mom's friend has hepatitis C pretty bad now so is trying to get back into rehab, or your uncle hasn't died yet from kidney failure after years of heroin topped with liquor... it's all so hopeless and depressing. But people come from that, and for some, to make it as far as a Gino Hernandez or Kerry Von Erich even did can be a success story, seeing beyond the plywood windows of their hometown. Then again, it could be the failure it seems - a guy like Kerry with every chance and every opportunity and yet he could never keep himself clean. Maybe he didn't want it in the first place. Who the fuck knows? But it's never black-and-white, nothing ever is. Shit, I still love my home for making me who I am even with how fucked it is. It sits in that part of the New South heavy with the Hispanic influx and thick with black influence as well that when you ride through town, it seems almost like equal thirds - with tiendas and urban clothez shopz alongside junk stores, and it all seems so perfect to me.

Watching Gino Hernandez, you can see how he and Tully Blanchard came up together, because they both are masters of being able to somehow stall seem like the ultimate weasel heel while still selling their pain. And I can imagine a lot of young girls just discovering themselves blooming masturbating while thinking about a Kerry Von Erich poster. But this is all about Gino Hernandez for me, as he's always been one of my favorites who never got a chance to hit their true potential. Had Hernandez still been alive, they could've just had him with Blanchard, Arn Anderson, and Flair, and you would've had the perfect Four Horsemen without having to foul it up by switching out the fourth member to go face every couple of years.

Very weak looking ref bump (who hurts his back bouncing into the ropes), allowing Gino to pull out some sort of brass knucks looking item made out of athletic tape, working the crowd up, but Kerry nails some three roundhouse punches, working them higher because the tomfoolery won't succeed, and Gino falls into the ropes after the third to bounce back off with a right cross with the foreignish object to get the pin. I love old wrestling when they had big crowds that weren't trying to hold up signs and still believed, because you can actually hear the squeals of the crowd grow as the ref comes to and build with each slap of the ref's count, reaching a crescendo of shock at three that quickly turns into boos with the official ringing of the bell. The best bookers and writers in the world couldn't make that type of perfection happen today without the mass of trusting humanity sitting there watching that they had back then.

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8 FISTS IN THE FACE OF WRESTLING, MOTHERFUCKER.

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYAZ